

24.4.22 am

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Date: 24 April 2022

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [0 : 0 0] Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down. Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down.
Fixed in us thy number dwelling, all thy faithful mercies down.
Jesus, thou art whole compassion, pure unbounded love, thou art.
Visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.
Clean, O clean, thy loving spirit, into every trouble rest.
- [1 : 2 7] Let us all in thee, in heaven, let us find thy promise best.
Take away the love of sinning, how far nor may I be.
And no faith does its beginning, set the hearts of liberty.
Come almighty to deliver, let us all thy grace receive.
Suddenly return, I'll never, evermore thy temples be.
- [2 : 3 0] Healing, would be always blessed. Serve thee, us thy hosts above.
Pray and praise thee without ceasing. Glory in thy birth and love.
Finish and thy new creation. Pure of God, let us be. Pure of God, let us be.
Let us be thy great salvation. Perfectly restore in thee.
Change from glory into glory. Till in heaven we take our place.
- [3 : 3 3] Till we cast our crowns before thee. Lost in wonder, love and place.
Let us unite our hearts in prayer together.
Let us pray. Let us pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day, your day.
The day where we remember once more that Jesus, your Son, our Saviour, died on a cross for our sin. To take away the punishment that we were due and rose from the dead.
We thank you that on the first day of the week, Jesus rose from the dead. And promised that resurrection life to all who believe.
- [4 : 3 6] And we pray that you would give each of us faith. That we would believe all that we are sinning. That we would believe all that we are reading in the Bible. That we would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.
And we thank you that that is the message that is repeated throughout Scripture. That we are to believe. We are to put our faith in Jesus.
And when we put our faith in Jesus, we can say with the hymn writer there that we will take our place in heaven. We thank you that there is nothing uncertain about the hope that we have when we are in Christ.
We thank you that we don't have to work to reach a level where you accept us. Because we know that our good works would never be good enough to make it to the perfect standard that God sets.

We thank you, Lord, that it's not about us endeavoring to be attentive in all the rituals of religion that make us acceptable.

[5 : 49] We thank you that we are saved by faith. By grace. Through faith. And it's in Jesus. In all that he has done. In all that he is.

And so we pray that you would help us to fix our eyes upon Jesus. When we were lost. When we were in sin. When we had no hope.

We thank you. That God the Son came from heaven to earth. To save us. And we pray that you would enable us each to receive that salvation.

To take the gift of eternal life. To take that place in heaven that is freely offered to us. As we trust in Christ. And we thank you for the comfort that that brings.

We are always conscious of those who are grieving. Of those who miss. Those whom they have loved and spent time with. Who have gone on ahead. From this world.

[6 : 49] And we thank you that when. They are in Christ. There is the promise of that place. Where there is no suffering. And no sickness. And no pain. No sorrow.

No sin. But perfect peace in life. So we pray for those who are grieving. And we ask Lord that you would comfort them. That you would strengthen them.

That you would give them that sense of your presence. And the hope of the gospel. We pray for those who are struggling with different things. There are some who are anxious.

Who may think about the week ahead. And the different appointments. And the different things that they anticipate. We thank you that you are a God.

Who does not watch us at a distance. And not enter into our suffering. But we thank you. That God the Son came into this world. And experienced all the anxieties that we experience.

[7 : 47] And we are able to come to Jesus. With our problems. And our worries. And our cares. Coming to one who understands. And who is able to help. So for those who are anxious.

For those who are feeling weary. For those who are wrestling with fear. We ask Lord that you would meet them. At the point of their need. We pray for those who may be healthy.

And who may be happy in terms of material things. But who are outside of Christ. For those who may be healthy. Some perhaps who know that.

And who have that sense of something missing. In their heart. We ask Lord that they would meet with Jesus. Lord God. That you would meet with them.

And for others who perhaps have no knowledge even of that. Who are getting on with life. Who are busy. And who have no sense of the danger that they are in.

[8 : 47] We ask Lord that you would awaken souls. That they. And that we. We'd each know. Our danger. If we are apart from Christ. And the wonder.

Of the salvation that is offered in Jesus. And Lord we pray for those who are. Rejoicing today as well. As a congregation. We have been rejoicing in past weeks.

For new life. And we thank you Lord for. For the safe arrival of baby Evelyn this week. And we thank you for Mihaela. And for her health and protection.

And we pray that you would bless. Them as a family. Ian. And Miriam as well. That as a family. They would know. Your hand upon them for good.

And we thank you for. Hearing our prayers. We thank you Lord for. This. New arrival. Into this place. Peace. And we ask Lord. That little Evelyn.

[9 : 45] Would grow up. To know you. And trust you. To walk close with you. And to bring glory to your name. And what we pray for her. We pray for Isabel as well. With us this morning. That your hand would be upon her.

And all of the family. That they too would know. Your presence. And your peace. We pray for Mackenzie. And we pray for Joyce. As they carry. Young ones that we have not yet met.

We. Keep on praying. With thankfulness. That you're the God. Who knows us. Even in the womb. And so we pray for your protection. Over these wee ones. And the mums. That.

You would guard them. And keep them. So hear our prayers. Be at work Lord. In this place. Today. May we truly be in the spirit. Of worship. Be at work Lord.

In our nation. As we. See. Ourselves. Drift further and further away from you. Have mercy upon us. We pray. And draw us back. And be at work Lord.

[10 : 42] In this. This world. Where we. See so much conflict. And we see so much. Bloodshed. Man's. Inhumanity to man. We ask Lord.

That you would. Intervene. Where there is suffering. That you would bring peace. Where there are wars. And make us mindful. Lord. We pray. Of these signs. That we have been warned of.

That towards the end. Before Jesus comes back. These things will happen. And so make us. Ready. We pray. For that day. When Christ will return. Or call us home.

So hear our prayers. Take away. Our sin. We ask. We confess Lord. That we fall short. We sin. And thought. And word. And deed. The good.

That we want to do. We so often. Leave undone. The evil. That we don't want to do. We so often. Find ourselves. Back in. Cleanse us. We pray. In the blood.

[11 : 38] Of Christ. And help us. We pray. To know. Your presence. In this hour. And we ask all this. In Jesus name. Amen. Come forward. Please.

Come forward. Please. Come forward. Please. Come forward. Come forward. Please. Come forward. Please. Come forward. Please.

You can come a wee bit. A wee bit. Farther forward. A wee bit. Farther forward. How's everyone today? Good. Good. Good.

Now. I've got. A story. To tell you. Well. A true story. To tell you. This morning. I was away on holiday. We were all. Quite a lot of us.

We were away. Who was away on holiday. The last few weeks. Quite a few of us. Were away on holiday. And it's. It's nice to go away. And it's nice to get the ferry. And. And to go and visit people. And do fun things.

[12 : 33] And it's nice to come home. But. Um. This. Last time. When I was on holiday. I had trouble coming home. Because. Well.

Before. We weren't on holiday. We booked the ferry. And. And we were due to go out. And we went out. At a certain time. As was. Scheduled. And then. I was due to come back.

On. I think it was the Tuesday morning. First thing. And on Monday night. Ping. On the phone. And what happened. John Rory. It was.

Not just delayed. Canceled. The ferry was cancelled. Somebody got COVID. COVID. And the ferry was cancelled. So. I got the message. And it said something like.

Your ferry's cancelled. Something to do with COVID. Didn't quite say that. But you know. You get the gist of it. Please phone this number. So. I tried to phone the number. And it kept saying.

[13 : 29] Uh. The lines are so busy. You please go away. You can't. You can't even hold. You can't go in a queue. You just have to phone back later. So. I kept on trying. And I tried for about.

An hour and a half. Michael. And then after. An hour and a half. I got through. So. The man on the side. Of the other side of the phone. Who was.

Not in Harris. Or Lewis. Somewhere far away. I don't know where. He said. Can I help you? I said. Well yeah. I've got this message. That says. My ferry was.

Was cancelled. And I'm just checking. When. The ferry's rescheduled for. So I can get home. Oh yeah. The ferry. Was going to be going in the morning. It's going at half past five.

The same day. So I said. Okay. That's fine. I'll be there for half past five. Would you like to make a booking? He said. I said. Make a booking. I already have a booking.

[14 : 24] He says. No. That ferry's cancelled. I said. I know. But surely I'm on the next. Oh no. No. No. No. No.

Oh. Well in that case. I would like to make a booking. Sorry. We're fully booked. So I said. What am I supposed to do? Oh.

You could try Stornoway. I suppose. And. I said. Well. I've got to go to Glenelg. To pick up a dollar. It'll be in hour. Four hours of our drive. Oh.

Well. You can go on standby. I said. I'll go on standby then. How early would I have to be there. To be sure of my place. I think if you give it two hours, you'll get on. So I went, okay, two hours.

So three hours before the ferry was sailing, I was to be down there checking in. And I thought, well, just to be on the safe side, I'll go four hours. So I went four hours early for that ferry.

[15 : 24] And I was sixth in the queue for standby. So the big guy came on the pier and went, hello, how are you today? Not too bad. I said, what are the chances of me getting over here?

Oh, I wouldn't like to say. Certainly it's not sure. I mean, I don't know. I don't know. Look at all these camper vans. There are a lot of vehicles to get onto the ferry today. So we'll do what we can, but I can't guarantee it.

Maybe people will cancel. I'll come back to you in an hour. So he came back in an hour, no cancellations. Two hours, no cancellations. Three hours, no cancellations. So I said, am I going to get on this ferry or not?

He says, well, try our best. So all the vehicles started going on that were booked. And they went to the end of the ferry.

And then the cars in front of me started to move. And I said to the guy, I'm getting on the ferry then, am I? Oh, we can't be sure. Just drive along to the end of the pier. And if we can get you on, we'll get you on.

[16 : 28] And if not, you'll have to go back. So I was standing in the car at the very end of the pier. And I was winding down the window. I said, am I getting on? Give us five minutes.

We'll see. And to cut a long story short, I've already told you the long story. So it's not cutting it short. To make a long story long, I got on the ferry.

And I got home. Is it nice to not know if you're going to get home? You know, you want to know you're going to get home, don't you?

You want to know you have a place on the ferry. You want to know that you can get home. Well, I didn't really get more holidays. I was just sitting in a Cal Mac car park.

But it's good to get home. Now, here's the question, Michael. You can answer this one. Jesus talked about a place called home. What was he talking about?

[17 : 31] He's talking about heaven, wasn't he? Yeah. And Jesus promises that if we believe in him, there is a place in heaven for us.

Doesn't he? If we believe in Jesus, do you think there might be one day when we get a text message saying, I'm sorry, your place in heaven is cancelled. You've been behaving a bit badly.

The heavens are getting a bit full. Do you think there might ever be a time when we get a message from God saying, your place in heaven, you made a booking, but you're not getting it?

Do you think? If you believe in Jesus, Jesus says there's a place in heaven for us. Do you think he'll ever go back on his promise?

That's the question. And the answer is no, no, no. Listen to what Jesus says in John 14. He's speaking to his disciples. They were a bit worried, but anxious.

[18 : 37] And Jesus says to them in John chapter 14, verse 2, In my father's house, he's talking about heaven. He says there are many mansions.

If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. So it's Jesus who goes.

And if we've believed in him, he is preparing a place specially for us in heaven. And he promises that when he comes back to this world, or when he calls us to go from this world, there's definitely a place for us.

We're never going to be like me in a Cal Mack car park, thinking, oh no, is there a place or is there not a place? Because Jesus has promised, and he never breaks his promises.

There's no ifs. There's no maybes. Jesus' promises are sure. So if we believe in him, we're going to get home.

[19 : 47] We're going to get a place in heaven. This was my reading this morning, so let me just give you the text that I got this morning. Jesus said to the disciples, in Luke chapter 10 and verse 20, Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Think about that. If you've believed in Jesus, your name is written in heaven. And that means we don't have to worry, and we don't need to be sad.

We don't need to fear, even when we're coming to the end of life. And you're very young, but sometimes when you're with people, and they know that life is coming towards an end, they can be a bit worried, and we can say, remember Jesus' promises.

There's a place prepared for all who believe. So boys and girls, let's be believing in Jesus, and let's pray.

Lord God, we thank you that you are good. We thank you that you love us. We thank you that you have promised in the Bible that all who believe in Jesus will not perish, but will have everlasting life.

[20 : 56] We thank you that when we believe in Jesus, there is a place being prepared in heaven for us. Our names are written in heaven. So we pray that everyone here, anybody who's listening, would have their name written in heaven, and that you would help us not to be scared, but to trust you, because we know that you save us, not through what we do, but through what Jesus has already done.

And that is by grace. And we ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now, and we're going to sing the words on the screen. Your grace.

And you know what grace is? It's about the cross, everything that Jesus did. Your grace that leads this sinner home from death to life forever.

So we'll stand, and we'll sing to God's praise. Amen. So we're doing it.

And you know what grace is not, and we'll sing to God. For the cross is not a Sung! We'll sing to God's sí, of the cross, but the cross is ten ■■■■■■ Lost, and the cross is the jumping from their soul. and sings the song of righteousness by blood and not by merit.

[22 : 30] Your grace that reaches far and wide to every tribe and nation has called my heart to enter in the joy of your salvation.

By grace I am redeemed, by grace I am restored, and now I feel it all into the arms of Christ my Lord.

Your grace that I cannot explain not by my earthly wisdom, the prince of mine without a stain, was traded for this sinner.

By grace I am redeemed, by grace I am restored, and now I freely walk into the arms of Christ my Lord.

Let grace my son and overflow, my song resound forever, for grace will see me welcomed home, to walk beside my Savior.

[24 : 26] By grace I am redeemed, by grace I am restored, and now I freely walk into the arms of Christ my Lord.

my Lord. By grace I am redeemed, by grace I am restored, by grace I am restored, and now I freely walk into the arms of Christ my Lord. my grace I am restored, my grace I am restored, and now I freely walk into the arms of Christ my Lord.

Okay boys and girls, if you head through to Sunday school. And we can turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter 19 please.

Luke chapter 19.

And we'll read just a few verses, verse 45 to verse 48. Jesus is coming close to Jerusalem, we've just had the triumphal entry, a joyful scene.

[26 : 12] And then Jesus, he weeps over the city of Jerusalem, as he knows how he will be received, and how they'll respond to the offer of peace with God.

And then he enters Jerusalem. Verse 45. Then Jesus entered the temple area, and began driving out those who were selling. It is written, he said to them, my house will be a house of prayer, but you have made a den of robbers, every day he was teaching at the temple.

But the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.

And I'm going to read one more section, it's not on the screen, but you can just listen to a few verses. That's Luke's account of this scene.

And we have it in various gospels. I'll read one more. Mark. This is probably Peter, the disciples view of the scene on this particular day. And he tells it to Mark, and Mark writes this, this eyewitness account of the same scene.

[27 : 22] And it's Luke, it's Mark chapter 11 and verse 15. And it says there, you have made it a den of robbers.

The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching. And when evening came, they went out of the city.

So may God bless that reading of his word to us. We're going to sing again now to God's praise. And we sing in Gaelic, Psalm 95, verses six and seven, two stanzas of the Psalm.

I'll read them in English. O come and let us worship him. Let us bow down with all. And on our knees before the Lord, our maker, let us fall. For he's our God, the people we of his own pasture are, and of his hand the sheep today, if ye his voice will hear.

These two stanzas and we'll remain seated to sing in Gaelic. Two stanzas and I will listen correctly. Welcome to the indemnment passion. He was tied in here, David Benstmark. He was less mindful and valued with loyalty, and soon he marched into his hand and only with his with vice versa.

[29 : 15] Jeremy Enable had a Infrastructure, and very proud of His, and I wanted to ask that Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[31 : 51] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. we look to you in Jesus name. Amen. It's great to see the children in church and it's great to hear the children in church.

[33 : 27] When you go to different places and you have a children's talk and you ask for a bit of response then there tends to be zero response but with our crew here, once they start they don't stop, they keep on going. They give great answers in relation to the questions being asked and sometimes they give great answers and they ask questions which are seemingly nothing to do with the questions that are being asked.

Last Sunday morning, I heard it, probably some of you heard it too but I chose not to engage. Little Callum Price, in the middle of the discussion, he just piped up and he asked a question he says, does God have windows?

And I heard it and I thought, I don't think I'm going to go there just now because we were already at length but I didn't know exactly what he was getting at but I followed up on it later and it was an interesting question.

He was asking the question does God have windows through which he can look in to see us? Or I suppose to shorten the question, he's he's saying, can God see us?

Can God look into our lives? Can he see the places that we're going? Can he see the things that we're doing? And of course the answer is yes. He can.

[34 : 54] God doesn't need windows to see. He can see everything. He is the omniscient. He is the all seeing God. He can see in the windows of the church just now.

He can see through the wall into the Sunday school. And that takes us back to the text of Luke 19 at the end. We see Jesus, he's approaching Jerusalem.

Still, you could say he has tears in his eyes as he approaches Jerusalem because he is thinking about the peace that the people in Jerusalem are refusing.

as they refused him, the prince of peace. And now as Jesus enters the temple area, he, to use Callum's phrase, he looks in the window of the temple.

And he sees all the activity. He sees all that's going on and he begins to take action. So the Jesus that we see in this short section is a Jesus that may surprise us.

[36 : 10] At the cultural level, we have portrayed Jesus as very gentle and almost timid. But we don't see that in Jesus here in this passage.

There is force, there is power. There is something very unsettling about how Jesus enters this church and begins to intervene in what's going on.

So, looking at these few verses, I've got six short points which I'll endeavour to get through in the time. We may have less than that. We'll see how we get on. But, six short points as we step through these verses.

And the first point is chief end. That's the phrase I want to underline. And I know chief end, to speak about a chief end, is not exactly modern speech.

It takes those who are, those of us who are a bit older, back to the shorter catechism, the first question. And if I asked you what the first question in the shorter catechism is, you would say, well, the question is, what is the chief end of man?

[37 : 23] And the answer is, man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. And if we were to put that in modern language, we might say, what is our first priority?

What should our first priority, our chief end be? And the answer is, God. Our chief end, our first priority should be the worship of God.

And notice that as Jesus enters Jerusalem, he enters this place that's buzzing at the time of this huge festival. And notice that he doesn't go straight to the shops.

He doesn't go out for a meal. He doesn't climb a hill or go for a picnic. He doesn't go to check where he can get some Wi-Fi so he can go through his emails.

He goes straight to the place of worship. The first thing we see when Jesus enters Jerusalem, he enters, verse 45, the temple area.

[38 : 36] He goes directly to his father's house. And in doing so, Jesus sets us an example.

And Jesus came to this world to be much more than an example, but he did come also to be an example. And Jesus sets an example as he enters into this place of Jerusalem.

He goes straight to the temple. Goes straight to his father's house. In Matthew 6, and verse 33, Jesus says, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

And that's what Jesus does here. He goes straight to the place of prayer. And that should cause us to examine ourselves in application.

Let me ask the question of you as I have had to wrestle with this question myself throughout the week. what is your chief end? What comes first in your life?

[39 : 49] What takes priority over everything else? Is it God? Is it the worship of God or is he a way down the list somewhere?

You know, we make an effort to be in certain places week by week. We make an effort to book our place in the gym class.

We make sure that we're at our desk at the prescribed time each morning to do our work. We arrange to visit friends at their houses. But how much effort do we make to be in God's house morning and evening, let me say?

And then midweek, when life is busy, there's a whole lot of things going on. How much of a chief end is it to actually determine to be in the house of prayer?

And only you know the answer to these questions. I'm not here to point fingers or throw stones or judge you.

[41 : 01] Only you know your own life, your own schedule, your own priorities. But these are questions that are right for us to think through.

So the first thing is the chief end. We see Jesus, when he arrives in Jerusalem, the first thing he does is go to his father's house. Second point is confrontation.

And it says there in verse 45, as we track through the verses, then Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out, you know, there's real power in these words, he began driving out those who were selling.

He doesn't knock at the door and seek entry and kind of nervously stand back. No, he enters boldly and he immediately confronts the people in terms of what's going on and he drives out those who were selling.

And what we have here actually is a picture of judgment. Jesus goes to the temple, he looks around, he doesn't like what he sees as he looks in the window.

[42 : 19] And so there's a confrontation where God the Son at the micro level he acts in judgment, he confronts the religious leaders.

It says in 1 Peter chapter 4 and at verse 17 judgment must begin at the house of God. judgment must begin at the house of God.

Now sadly sometimes it can be those who are in the house of God who are most judgmental when it comes to other people. Sometimes we are the people who look around at everybody on the outside and we see what what's going on and we see things happening that are against the Bible and we rant and we rave rather than reach out to these people.

We say things like something's got to be done about that, something's got to be done about them. We point a long finger in judgment and yet here as we see God the Son arrive in Jerusalem, he doesn't go directly to the prison house to blast those in prison with a word of judgment.

He doesn't go directly to the public house to speak a word of judgment. He goes directly to the house of God. He goes straight to the religious people.

[43 : 45] He goes to those people who have God's word in their hand, who know God's word. And that's where judgment begins. That's the scene for this confrontation.

And it's quite a scene. It's a scene that may take many people by surprise.

Jesus, he doesn't nervously approach the traders and ask them for a quiet word. He began driving out those who were selling.

Matthew and Mark tell us about the fact that Jesus overturned the tables and the benches. Money would have been flying everywhere.

Animals would have been on the move. Jesus is throwing tables over. And Mark tells us as well that Jesus, he would not allow anyone to carry merchandise to the temple courts.

[44 : 54] So you can imagine these people coming with the stuff they're going to sell and Jesus is standing at the door and he's saying, you're not getting in. You're not getting past me. A huge disturbance.

If you glance back at the previous section, verse 28 to 44, we see and we thought about this a week or two back. We thought about the prophecy of Jesus as king is fulfilled in the triumphal entry.

that passage from Zechariah that speaks about the coming of the king riding on the donkey and we see that happening. The king, the prophecy comes to life as Jesus is approaching Jerusalem.

But now in this section we see the power of the king. Not the prophecy of the king but more so the power of the king as he single-handedly brings the markets down.

he stops all trading immediately. And just to get a picture in our minds of what was going on, the commentators, the scholars, they tell us that the area of commerce was similar in size to what we would know as several football pitches.

[46 : 17] We're talking about a vast area. Think about the football pitch down there multiplied a good number of times. Animals everywhere, money changers everywhere, a whole massive commercial operation is going on.

Hundreds if not thousands they say of sellers were there at that time and none of them would have been happy to stop trading but such was the authority of Jesus and the power of Jesus that no one could stand against him.

And immediately business stops. again this is a picture of a greater judgment that's to come, an ultimate confrontation.

We see a snapshot here of a confrontation but there is an ultimate confrontation coming for some when they stand before Jesus.

there are many today there may be some in here today who don't really take Jesus seriously.

[47 : 27] You know Jesus you pay a bit of lip service to him he'll come along every few weeks when you when you're in trouble you want to pray and call him to attention but when the storm has passed no need for him anymore.

Jesus serves you. There's many many people who don't take Jesus seriously but there's coming a day where everyone will have to take Jesus seriously.

There's coming a day where we will all stand before Jesus and there'll be no arguing with him.

There will be no resisting him. Every knee will bow before him as king. Every tongue will confess that he is Lord.

Some will do so in joy as Jesus calls them to be with him eternally and others will do so in fear as Jesus drives them away as he drove these sellers away.

[48 : 45] So there's this confrontation. The third point is complaint. We'll think about the reasons for Jesus' complaint. Some places we go and we may visit them or we may eat out in a restaurant and we're happy with our experience.

We speak about it. There's other places we go and we're not happy at all. And if we feel strongly about what we see or what we've tasted, we want to see the manager. We want to make a complaint.

And as Jesus enters the temple here, very clearly he's unhappy. So what caused this? What were the reasons for Jesus' complaint?

Well, I think in general terms we could say there were two reasons. We can gather our thoughts under two main reasons. The first thing that Jesus complained about was what was happening within the temple.

And the second thing Jesus complained about was what wasn't happening in the temple. So as he looks in, he sees what is happening and he is extremely unhappy about it.

[49 : 58] And as he looks in, he sees what's not happening and he's unhappy about that. So first of all, what was happening in the temple that gave Jesus cause for complaint?

Well, what was happening in the temple was business. Profiteering. There was a lot of activity in the temple.

The priests were always on their feet. They were always offering up sacrifices. But it's not the sacrifices that Jesus objected to. To make sacrifices was to follow God's law. So it was necessary that in the temple there would be sacrifices.

It says in Hebrews 9.22 without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. So blood needed to be shed and Jesus' blood would soon be shed as the perfect sacrifice, the once and for all sacrifice to end all sacrifices.

By the end of this week, Jesus, the Lamb of God, would through his shed blood take away the sins of the world. So it wasn't the sacrifices that was the problem here.

[51 : 05] The problem was that the priests were making a lot of money out of the sacrifices. They were selling animals for sacrifice at hugely inflated prices.

Josephus, one of the historians from that time, a Jewish historian, he wrote about the bazaars of Annas, the high priest. Contemptuously, he wrote about these places of extortion.

William Barclay, the commentator, says, there were times when a pair of doves would cost as much as 75 pence inside the temple and considerably less than 5 pence outside. side. Again, it was a deliberately planned victimization of the poor pilgrims, nothing more or less than legalized robbery.

So what was going on in the temple was just greed and profiteering, exploitation.

[52 : 20] The priests on top of all that were demanding temple taxes and temple taxes had to be paid with temple money and so you had to change your money into temple money and the rates of commission were absolutely astronomical.

So everywhere you went, you were being robbed. This was a business center. This place was buzzing with the sound of commerce.

There was lots of evidence that these religious people had a great love of money and a desire to have money but there's no evidence at all that any of them have any desire to be with God in prayer.

Such was the noise and the activity and the temple. There wasn't a corner in this area where one could be still and actually meet with God.

And so when Jesus saw this, he has reason for complaint. So over went the tables. Business stops.

[53 : 29] The markets close. And the other reason that Jesus was unhappy was because of what wasn't happening in the temple.

And what wasn't happening is prayer. There's no prayer. And we're not surmising this, how Jesus makes that crystal clear.

prayer. He says to them, as he evicts all these sellers, it is written, my house will be a house of prayer.

Verse 46. But you have made a den of robbers. So that's what Jesus objected to back then.

And to be honest, that's what Jesus still objects to today. Dale Ralph Davis, the commentator, says, we ought not to think that Jesus' scrutiny is limited to our first century temple, but realise that it extends to our worship assemblies today.

[54 : 37] And one of the sad affairs is that there is many a church that is no longer a house of prayer. So there's a lesson there for us as a church.

It's easy for churches to become places that are incredibly busy. They're not selling animals, but there can be all kinds of activity.

We can have notice sheets that are absolutely full. things go on every night of the week. But our primary function is not to be busy, it's to be still so that we can know God and so that we can worship God.

it's right for us to reach out. It's right for us to come together and encourage each other.

But the primary thing, the meeting that should fill this place is the prayer meeting. Everything else flows from that.

[55 : 57] God, if that's not happening, nothing else is effective. There's a lesson for us as a church, but there's a lesson for me and for you as believers, if you're a believer.

Because remember we're told in 1 Corinthians 6.19, our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. To our lives are to be places of worship.

And yet we can find that there's all kinds of merchandise in terms of this world. It's been carried through our hearts and filling our minds. We can find that sometimes our lives are so full of the cares of this world, the responsibility of work, the pursuit of leisure.

We have no time to worship. We say it. I can't be out on a Sunday evening. Wednesday night, far too good. I've seen my diary.

Too much on. But you know, if you and I have no time to pray, because of all that's been marched through our lives, Jesus has a complaint to raise with us.

[57 : 32] Fourth point, compassion. verse 47, every day Jesus was teaching at the temple.

So now we look into the temple window, and we can see that things have changed. It's gone from trade to teaching, Jesus' teacher.

ministry. It's gone from money-making to ministry. It's gone from a crude capitalism to a ministry of compassion.

The area, incidentally, that Jesus drove the sellers out of in the temple, the temple was split into various areas. And the area that Jesus drove the sellers out of was the area in the temple where the gospel message should have been proclaimed.

And Weerspey tells us this. We're not going to get past this point. He says the court of the Gentiles was the only place in the temple that was available to the Gentiles. There the Jews could witness to their pagan neighbors and tell them about the one true and living God.

[58 : 52] But instead of being devoted to evangelism, the area was used for a religious marketplace where Jews from other lands could exchange money and purchase approved sacrifices. The priests managed this business and made a good profit from it.

Instead of praying for the people, the priests were praying on the people. So that's the way things had been for a long, long time.

But now after this confrontation with Jesus, the sound of commerce was gone. There's no noise of tills anymore.

No sound of money being changed. And now the message of compassion has been taught. Commerce out.

And Jesus' message of compassion can be heard. to have compassion, it doesn't mean that we just feel sorry for someone.

[60 : 04] And I hope to be in the streets of Edinburgh tomorrow. I can walk down the streets of Edinburgh, I can see somebody sitting in a cardboard box. I may feel sympathy for them and empathy for them.

That's not compassion. compassion. To have compassion is to feel empathy, to see need and then act on it. And that's what Jesus did.

And we sang it at the beginning of the service. Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down. Jesus saw us in our need, he came down.

Jesus, thou art all compassion. And that now is the message that could be heard in the temple.

This is Monday in Jesus' last week in this world. And from Monday through till Thursday night, the people would hear about true compassion from Jesus.

[61 : 13] nothing else would be done. And then on Friday, the people would see the compassion of Jesus as he went to the cross.

And let me finish just by saying that the message of the gospel is a message of compassion. God's love.

The gospel story is not about us climbing up to God through our own religious efforts. Because we can't do it. And so many people today still think that they have to try to become a Christian.

God's God's God's God's love. They're trying to do this and trying to do that and trying not to do that thing and trying to do more of this thing. In an effort as if we could take our religious CV and show it to God and say, look at all the things I've done and look at all the things I haven't done.

Please, will you accept me on the basis of my CV? It's never going to be good enough. Because God's standard is perfection. We can't climb up a ladder of our own religion and works to meet with God.

[62 : 33] It's impossible. And the message of the Bible is a message where we're told that you can't do it.

And so God, rather than us trying to climb up, God came down. The gospel message is about God coming down to us in our need to save us through the cross.

And this is the message that Jesus was now preaching in the temple before he would go to the cross. The compassion of Jesus.

That's the message they heard back on that day. As we look in the window of that temple. And that's the message that we're hearing on this day.

The same message. So will you believe? Will we accept all that Jesus has done to save us?

[63 : 49] He lived for us a perfect sinless life. Because we couldn't do it. He died for us.

A sinner's death on the cross. So that we wouldn't have to. He rose from the dead. And promised that everyone who believed in him.

Everyone who simply asked for that grace would be saved. And taste that in this world.

And then know the fullness of that forever. The compassion of Jesus. And we're not finished but we're going to finish.

So let's pray. Lord we pray that you would give us eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts that would be moved as we think about the compassion of Jesus.

[65 : 01] Help us to take on board the challenge of these verses to examine ourselves not to examine anyone else. To think about the things that are happening in our lives and the things that aren't happening in our lives.

sin. And as we see Lord our sin. As we see how many causes for complaint you have against us. We pray that you would cleanse us in the blood of Christ.

The perfect once and for all sacrifice. Make us clean we pray. And save us not through who we are and what we're trying to do.

But through Jesus. Who he is. As the son of God. and all that he has done on our behalf. And we pray this in Jesus name.

Amen. We'll sing now the final hymn. 674 in mission praise and that takes us to the cross where we read and sing about that green hill far away without a city wall where the dear Lord was crucified who died to save us all.

[66 : 15] Amen. There is a green hill far away Without a city wall Where the dear Lord was crucified Who died to save us all We may not know, we cannot tell What grace he had to bear But he believed it was for us He hung and suffered there

He died that we might be forgiven He died to make us good That we might go at last to heaven Saved by his precious blood There was no other good enough To pay the price of sin He only could unlock the gate Of heaven and let us in Oh dearly, dearly, ask me, love And we must love him too

And trust in his redeeming blood And try his words to do And I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God the Father And the fellowship, the comfort of God the Holy Spirit Be with us all now and forevermore Amen